

News Release

National Wildlife Refuge System



Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge

**La Crosse District
555 Lester Avenue
Onalaska, WI 54650**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Contact: Bill Thrune (608) 783-8402
Jim Nissen (608) 783-8401**

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Coon Creek Delta Habitat Project Completed

Construction of three breakwater islands off the Coon Creek delta below Stoddard, Wisc. in Navigation Pool 8 was recently completed. This habitat restoration project, known as Pool 8 Islands, Phase III, Stage 1, was funded through the Environmental Management Program. The overall goal of the project is to maintain or increase the size of the Coon Creek delta, an area that provides important habitat to fish and wildlife.

Each of the three islands has a specific purpose. Details include:

- Island E1 is 600' long and was constructed entirely of rockfill. This island is designed to protect the delta from river flows. Cobble and gravel were placed along the upstream side of the island to provide the type of substrate preferred by walleye and other species for spawning.
- Islands E2 and E3 are to protect the delta from southerly and southwesterly winds. Island E2 was constructed using a combination of black locust logs and rockfill. The logs were harvested on Goose Island and are anchored in place by rock. This island is 760' in length.
- Island E3 is the longest island at nearly 1,150' and constructed of rockfill. A 10' wide strip of fill, almost 1,500 cubic yards, was placed on the landward side of the island to promote the growth of vegetation. The fill was obtained by dredging in front of the island along the full length. Willows will be

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planted next spring after the fill has stabilized. Because the fill is currently unstable, the island is temporarily closed to access. Red warning signs have been posted around the island.

A fourth component – building an offshore rock mound to protect an eroding section of shoreline on the south side of East Island, has also been completed.

This project is located on the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge in an area open to public hunting. During construction, worksites were temporarily closed to access to ensure the safety of construction crews. With the exception of Island E3, the temporary ban has been lifted and access is now permitted. Island E3 is expected to be open for access in 2007.

The project was planned and designed as a cooperative effort between the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Wisconsin and Minnesota Departments of Natural Resources, and the public. The contractor was Holte Contracting Inc. of Little Canada, Minn. Preliminary construction costs were \$865,000.

For more information, please contact the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge office in Onalaska, Wisc. The office is located at 555 Lester Avenue and office hours are 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The telephone number is (608) 783-8405.

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The Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge is the most visited refuge in the United States. The refuge extends 261 miles along the Upper Mississippi River from Wabasha, Minn. to Rock Island, Ill., protecting and preserving habitat for migratory birds, fish, and a variety of other wildlife. This 240,000 acre refuge was established in 1924.